

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0698016

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Architectural Resources of La Grange
AND/OR COMMON**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

La Grange

STATE

California

VICINITY OF

CODE
06

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

14

COUNTY
StanislausCODE
099**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE☒ OBJECT
Multiple
Resources

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☒ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☒ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED
☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE
☒ COMMERCIAL
☐ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☐ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSEUM
☐ PARK
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☒ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☒ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER: Vacant**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple ownership: see continuation sheet

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder's Office, Stanislaus County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

1100 I Street

CITY, TOWN

Modesto

STATE
California**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

State Historic Resources Survey

DATE

January 1975

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Stanislaus County Parks and Recreation Department

CITY, TOWN

Modesto

STATE
California

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PROPERTY

OWNER

St. Louis Catholic Church

✓ Catholic Roman Bishop of Stockton
1225 Olive Avenue
Oakdale, California 95361

La Grange Schoolhouse

✓ Stanislaus County
1716 Morgan Road
Modesto, California 95351

Old Adobe Barn

✓ Stanislaus County
1716 Morgan Road
Modesto, California 95351

Stage Stop

✓ Stanislaus County
1716 Morgan Road
Modesto, California 95351

Shell Gas Station

✓ Frank Birdsong
P.O. Box 92
La Grange, California 95329

Kingen Hotel

✓ Donald R. Kingen
P.O. Box 163
La Grange, California 95329

Louie's Place

✓ James D. Horn
3225 Yosemite Boulevard
Modesto, California 95351

Odd Fellows Hall

✓ Lodge Lafayette IOOF #65
c/o Sidney Moon
La Grange, California 95329

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

—EXCELLENT

☒ GOOD

—FAIR

☒ DETERIORATED

—RUINS

—UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED

☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

—MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The entire town of La Grange was surveyed encompassing an area of approximately 20 acres. The total acreage of the nominated properties is 1 1/2 acres.

The Historic Resources of La Grange consist of eight architecturally and/or historically significant entities:

1. Condition: good, restored, original site. St. Louis Catholic Church is a simple, mid-nineteenth century vernacular rendition of the Greek Revival.

Built in 1854, St. Louis Catholic Church has retained its original setting surrounded by a nineteenth century cemetery of individual family plots enclosed by elaborate Gothic style cast iron fences. The headstones date back to the mid-nineteenth century.

The facade of this wood frame structure is delineated with a central pedimented entrance way, corner pilasters and boxed gable end roof. Simple pedimented six over six double hung windows are symmetrically placed on both sides of the building. A small rear addition repeats the classic form and cornice detailing.

The church fell into decay early in the twentieth century. A great part of the roof had been torn off by storms. In 1914, a collection was taken among the people of the church to restore the much depreciated structure.

In 1930, a new concrete foundation was placed under the church and concrete steps were erected at the entrance.

2. Condition: good, altered, original site. The Old La Grange Schoolhouse is located on top of a hill overlooking the town of La Grange. This one-story wood frame building with rock foundation and shingle roof is a vernacular rendition of the Greek Revival. Picturesque details were added at a later date.

The facade is delineated by three bays surmounted by a steeply pitched gable with pilasters supporting box cornice return. The symmetry is enhanced by fanlights above the central entrance porch and rear windows. Originally these apertures provided ventilation for the attic. The main entrance is a coffered door.

A transom is above this entrance.

A turn of the century addition is a bell tower which replaces the original. The restored tower differs slightly in decorative jigsaw work imitating the original and it no longer supports the flag spire. A porch was added, apparently circa 1900, across the front replacing the original.

The interior apparently housed a single schoolroom with entry hall and coatroom. Original painted wood blackboard remains.

A rear window has been altered at a later date to construct a second exit from the building. The coatroom was changed to a washroom while a section of wall was removed between the coatroom and classroom to allow passage from one area to the other over an added counter. A side window in the classroom was also altered as a doorway to an added unit of toilets. This side bathroom is the only architectural intrusion.

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3. Condition: deteriorated, slightly altered, original site. The pre-1850 Old Adobe Barn is a rectangular building with a slate foundation. The face dimensions of the adobe bricks are approximately 16" to 18" by 3" to 4". The rear door and side windows appear to be set in at a later date. To prevent further deterioration large wooden boards, approximately 8' by 2' in face dimensions, have been bolted into the adobe walls on the sides and rear. Later 19th century alterations include two feet wide redwood siding on the facade and a protective tin roof. A wood addition on the side of the adobe barn was used as a stable.

4. Condition: good, slightly altered, original site. The Stage Stop, built in 1850-51, appears to have been constructed in two phases. This is indicated by the vertical seam delineated by the cracking stucco on the facade. Erected primarily from rubble-stone, the rectangular units differ from one another in the portion of stone to sand mortar used in wall construction, in the application of cut stone facings to the facades in decorative details and in iron door type. The unit on the left appears to be more carefully designed and constructed as well as somewhat older.

This left-hand structure's three bay flattened pedimented facade appears as a thoughtful classic rendering. Cut stone facing has been applied to the facade on the right, and the heavy iron doors of the two units are stylistically different from one another. These stylistic details all correspond to the vernacular Greek Revival work executed in La Grange in the 1850's.

The unit on the right has no pediment, no classic detail or proportion. It is a two bay structure that appears to have been more hastily constructed. The iron doors appear to have been differently built into the stone fabric, while the relieving arches over the entrances are more sophisticated structurally than those over the entrances of the other unit.

A wood structure abuts the rear of the structures and has in part collapsed. An I beam juts out through the door of the right unit and is supported by a wood post to form a kind of metal archway in the front of the building.

The facades of both buildings were stuccoed at a later date. The stucco has in part weathered away.

5. Condition: good, unaltered, original site. Prefabricated tin service station, circa 1920's, comprised of main building, projecting covered service area and separate restroom unit. Finials decorate the four corners of the flat-roofed service area. Poignantly distinctive restroom unit also prefabricated tin; completely free standing, with rounded lines reflective of nascent Moderne. This is a rare remaining example of this architectural type and period.

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6. Condition: good, slightly altered, original site. The Kingen Hotel is a simple two-story rectangular shiplap structure highlighted with a bold colonial revival dentilated cornice which runs across the three bay facade directly below the hipped roof. A tie-rod supported canopy embellished with a tin trim pressed in a variation on the anthemion motif projects out from the structure above the first floor.

There have been no major changes in the hotel since 1915, when it was first constructed.

7. Condition: good, altered, original site. The Louis Levaggi Saloon is a two-story concrete structure in the heart of La Grange. Decorative shallow round arches broken by central keystones have been placed over the first floor windows and door. A cast piece of heraldic sculpture ornaments the facade above the entrance.

Fortress-like in appearance, with an **ornamented** parapet, the Louis Levaggi Saloon offers a most unusual three bay facade: the smooth concrete surface has been articulated by a series of oversize rectangular indentations (approximately 18 inches by 12 inches) rendered in alternating horizontal and vertical patterns. The central bay of the parapet and the keystone of the entrance arch is imprinted with "1897 L. Levaggi" and "1897 L.L." The sides of the building are constructed of poured-in-place concrete covered with 1/2" stucco striped to resemble block construction. Structural reinforcement at the floor level between the first and second stories are metal plates which have been bolted into the wall surface. Still existing are metal shutter supports. A concrete horse trough and well stand in front of the building.

A wood porch upheld by slender metal supports has been added at a later date, and bisects the facade horizontally at the second floor level. In the rear, a two-story wood porch has also been added. The first floor of the facade is now stuccoed and painted pale green.

8. Condition: good, altered, original site. The La Grange Odd Fellows Hall built during the 1850's is a tall two-story wood structure executed in a vernacular Greek Revival style popular in California during the 1850's. The roof pitch, the box cornice returns, the tall narrow pilasters bracketing the building and the allusion to a three bay division given by windows and central doorway are all standard classical motifs enhancing the facade. Also typical for this period is the rubblestone foundation.

The porch of this imposing building appears to have been added. Ornamented with picturesque jigsaw work, it dates to the latter part of the nineteenth century. Other rooms have been constructed at the side and rear of the main structure, and intrude upon the architectural integrity of the building.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

La Grange was first known as French Bar, French miners having come to that region to prospect as early as 1852. The first settlement was originally made about one mile downstream from the present town of La Grange. With the flood of 1851, the town was moved onto higher ground at its present location. By 1855, La Grange had become a thriving center of trade, since the bulk of the population in the county had moved up into the mining regions.

At one time La Grange had boasted a 2,000 population. During the 1870's extensive hydraulic operations were carried on in the vicinity. A series of water ditches were built to bring water for hydraulic mining. With the passage of laws against hydraulic mining, the dredger operations came into being. Accompanying the dredge were the workers who established a camp on a hill overlooking the river and the lower dredging areas. Here they lived in modest homes and their lives revolved around the dredge operation. In order to maintain a living, they were constantly alert to the needs of the dredge as any breakdowns were costly to all.

The Wheaton dam and ditches near La Grange were constructed in the early '50's for mining purposes. Mr. Wheaton was one of the pioneers of the irrigation movement in the Modesto district, for he was among the first to advocate the purchase of his dam and water rights by the land owners on the plains for irrigation purposes. After the organization of the irrigation districts, his rights and property passed to the Modesto and Turlock districts and the La Grange dam was constructed. Today this dam is part of the system of Stanislaus County reservoirs which supplies Modesto and Turlock districts.

The small town of La Grange has a strikingly picturesque setting on the Tuolumne River. For several miles along its banks, thousands of rock mounds and pyramids stand as monuments to the Herculean efforts of early miners to harvest the golden treasure from the river's bed.

The oldest building in town is the adobe barn. Constructed of adobe bricks, it is a representative example of a distinctive architectural technology practiced by the Spanish pre-1850 and by some of the first Californians. The slightly raised slate foundation is also typical of building practices of this period. This structure was used by La Grange as a post office during the community's early history. It may have been built with this civic function in mind during the 1850's or it may have been adapted for this use during the gold rush years. The building may have originally been a residence or outbuilding.

Across the street stands the Stage Stop or Saunder's Store. This structure is a representative example of a stone building type utilized during the 1850's in California gold mining communities, and is the only remaining building of this type and style in La Grange. Its prominent iron doors are also representative. The classic rendering

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of the left unit is a significant translation of the popular Greek Revival style.

The Shell Gas Station is significant as an illustration of early U.S. service station architecture from the 1920's. The decorative finials which cap the four corners of the flat roof are indicative of the 1920's eclecticism often associated with skyscraper caps of the period. The fact that the restroom unit and service area remain intact make this a rare example of this architectural type and period.

The Kingen Hotel is significant as an unusual example of a vernacular Beaux-Arts building with colonial revival details exhibited in the cornice and tie-rod supported canopy, and as the only remaining hotel in La Grange from its historic period.

The Louis Levaggi Saloon or Louie's Place is an unusual structure stylistically and technologically. It is an idiosyncratic design for the late 1890's, and may represent the personal flair of the patron. This structure is an early example of the use of concrete construction for socially prominent structures. Concrete was not used with any frequency prior to the early twentieth century; little was known about the medium and when it was employed, it was usually for utilitarian purposes.

The I.O.O.F. Hall is a good example of the vernacular Greek Revival style found in California. The Odd Fellows Hall is significant for its architecture, and for its social function in the pioneer community.

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On a hill overlooking La Grange is the St. Louis Catholic Church. It is the oldest church in Stanislaus County and one of the oldest, excluding the Missions, in California. Architecturally it is significant as a vernacular Greek Revival structure, and remains as evidence of a style which dotted the towns and hillsides of Gold Rush California.

This church was erected by the Frenchmen of La Grange in 1854.

The La Grange Schoolhouse is a good example of vernacular Greek Revival architecture found in nineteenth century California. Undoubtedly built partially as a byproduct of the prosperity accruing to La Grange during the 1870's. Following a massive hydraulic mining operation in the area, the school was the community's first educational institution. Both the 1875 Greek Revival and the ca. 1900 picturesque details present on the building's exterior are indicative of major stylistic trends in California at these periods.

The schoolhouse was attended by most of the town's now elderly residents and is architecturally and historically significant as one of the oldest existing schoolhouses in Stanislaus County.

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U.T.M. REFERENCES

1. St. Louis Catholic Church: 10/724000/4171220
2. Old La Grange Schoolhouse: 10/723880/4171120
3. Old Adobe Barn: 10/724060/4171340
4. Stage Stop: 10/724100/4171340
5. Shell Gas Station: 10/723940/4171340
6. Kingen Hotel: 10/723880/4171300
7. Louie's Place: 10/723860/4171300
8. Odd Fellow's Hall: 10/723820/4171300